

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM – 2009

In 2009 Colorado is again using a Call for Proposals format to deliver the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). As in 2008, larger scale projects that have significant beneficial impacts on the declining species and associated habitats listed in the proposal contents and promoting partnerships will be emphasized. Habitat projects for low priority species may be submitted, however they are not encouraged. Proposals for individual or group projects may be submitted through the Request for Proposals (RFP) process; however, all projects will be evaluated using the same ranking criteria as outlined below.

All proposals and individual projects **MUST** be reviewed and signed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist and appropriate NRCS, Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), US Fish and Wildlife Service-Partners for Wildlife (USFWS-PFW), or Private Land Biologist before being submitted to the NRCS State Office for funding consideration.

The process for 2009 will involve the following steps pending funding deadlines:

1. If the local NRCS office is not sponsoring the proposal, the proposal sponsor shall contact the local NRCS office and inform them about proposal development intentions.
2. The proposal will be developed addressing all 11 elements listed under “Proposals Need to Include” in as much detail as possible.
3. Once the proposal is completed, it should be reviewed and signed by the District Conservationist and NRCS/CDOW Biologist. The proposal should identify the lead partner and that partner’s address.
4. Electronic files are encouraged; the proposal must be received in the NRCS State Office by close of business on ~~November 3, 2008~~, **extended to December 1, 2008**, at the following address: colakewood.nrcsprogram@co.usda.gov. Mailed copies of the proposal must be received in the NRCS State Office by close of business on ~~November 3, 2008~~, **extended to December 1, 2008**, at the following address:
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C
Lakewood, CO 80215
Attn: Tim Carney
5. A proposal review committee will prioritize the proposals using the attached prioritization tool.

6. After the committee prioritizes the proposals into high, medium, and low priority, they will rank the highest priority proposals first with the attached ranking form and recommend funding the proposals according to the ranking. If there is money left after funding high priority proposals, both 1) the medium and low priority proposals will be ranked and funded accordingly, and 2) individual applications that have been ranked using the statewide ranking system by the Field Office will be considered for funding.

If there are funds remaining after the highest ranked proposals are funded, then a supplemental sign-up for individual or multiple projects will be held. These projects will be ranked using a statewide ranking system and entered into ProTracts as individual applications. They will not require development of a proposal.

7. The local NRCS office and the lead partner will be notified of funding by December 15, 2008.

The project sponsors are responsible for the next two items:

8. Sponsors for multiple applicant proposals must then develop a screening and ranking tool that will be utilized to select the applications for funding. These ranking tools will be completed, reviewed by the NRCS Area and State Program Managers, by January 30, 2009.
9. Proposal sponsors will accept, screen, and rank applications and work with NRCS to plan the individual projects and upload them in NRCS's contracting system by February 20, 2009.
10. The NRCS Program Manager will approve applications by March 2, 2009.

Proposals that are received in the NRCS State Office by ~~November 3, 2008~~, **extended to December 1, 2008**, will be screened using the following questions:

High Priority Proposals must have a YES answer for all of the following:

1. Does the proposal target one or more of the following priority species?
 - Gunnison sage grouse, greater sage grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, plains sharp-tailed grouse, lesser prairie chicken, southwestern willow flycatcher, western yellow-billed cuckoo, imperiled bird species associated with the short-grass prairie (including shorebirds that utilize playas), or listed eastern plains native fish
2. Does the proposal enhance or restore a priority habitat type listed below?
 - Sagebrush steppe, mountain shrub/grassland, riparian, short grass prairie, sand sage/grasslands, or Playa Lake
3. Is the proposal area located within or adjacent to the identified occupied range of the targeted species?

4. Does the proposal identify and address limiting life history requirements, urgent threats, habitat issues, or other conservation needs of the targeted species?
5. Does the proposal include significant partner resources (other than the landowners) dedicated to the project? If so, please describe the in-kind and/or financial commitment.

Medium Priority Proposals must have a YES answer for the following:

1. Does the proposal target a State or Federal Threatened and Endangered species or State species of concern that is not listed above?
2. Does the proposal enhance or restore the appropriate habitat-type associated with the targeted species?
3. Is the proposal area located within or adjacent to the identified occupied range of the targeted species?
4. Does the proposal identify and address limiting life history requirements, urgent threats, habitat issues, or other conservation needs of the targeted species?
5. Does the proposal include some partner resources (other than the landowners)? If so, please describe the in-kind and/or financial commitment.

Low Priority – all other proposals that do not meet criteria above.

PROPOSALS NEED TO INCLUDE:

In order to rank the proposals the following information must be included with the application:

Pictures can be helpful!

Species: List the specific wildlife species that your proposed project is targeting. Priority species for 2009 projects are Gunnison sage grouse, greater sage grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, plains sharp-tailed grouse, lesser prairie chicken, southwestern willow flycatcher, western yellow-billed cuckoo, imperiled bird species associated with the shortgrass prairie including shorebirds that utilize playas, and listed eastern plains native fish.

Limiting Factors: Identify the limiting factor(s), threat(s), habitat requirement(s), or other conservation need(s) of the targeted species and explain how the proposed project will address the limiting factor(s). What is the anticipated response of the target species population if the project is completed?

Habitat: Describe the habitat that you will be improving (*Show how many acres of wildlife habitat you actually expect to create or enhance because of the project*).

Describe current condition of the existing habitat along with the expected condition of habitat after the project is completed. Priority habitats for 2009 projects are sagebrush steppe, mountain shrub/grasslands, riparian, shortgrass prairie, sand-sage/grasslands, and playas.

Location: Is the project located within the occupied range of the target species? Does the species currently inhabit the project site or project vicinity? If the project is located in potential range but is not currently inhabited by the target species, explain how the project will benefit the species. Please include appropriate maps. Contact local CDOW or NRCS Biologists for specific species information.

Practices: Give details of the practices that will be applied. Extents and costs are important. Provide an estimate of the total project acres treated by practice.

Management: Explain how the individual projects will be managed to benefit the targeted species. For example, if a proposal requires landowners to implement new grazing management actions, explain reason for the changes, describe the new prescriptions (timing, duration, and intensity) and state the expected results.

Management of Adjacent Lands: Explain how lands adjacent to the project are managed. Are they in public ownership? Are they in easements? If so, what type of easements? Are adjacent lands enrolled in wildlife programs or otherwise being managed for wildlife?

Landowner Cooperation: How many landowners are involved in the project? List the landowners and what they propose to do on their lands and how many acres each landowner expects to treat. What, if any, other contributions landowners may bring to the project.

Cost: In as much detail as possible, show expected costs of the project. Itemize expected expenditures and be specific about which items you want cost-share assistance.

Partnerships: Explain partnership commitments to the project. Be very specific. Who has committed to what and how much is the commitment worth? Is the commitment actual hard money, in-kind contribution or other? Is the commitment in writing, verbal, or just hearsay? Priority will be given to projects with written partner commitments.

Lead Partner: Name and address of lead partner for proposal. This Point of Contact will be responsible to notify all other sponsors to the proposal.

After the Proposals are prioritized by the State WHIP selection committee, proposals will be ranked using the following ranking system.

Each of the following items will be reviewed by the State WHIP selection committee and assigned a point value of 1-10. Proposals will be compared to each other to determine point assignment. Proposals with highest total points will be considered first for funding.

- 1) Proximity to important habitats and core populations of the targeted species.

Points_____

- 2) Proximity to areas that are protected and/or managed to benefit the target species (duration of protection and degree of management will be considered).

Points_____

- 3) The degree that proposed practices address identified limiting factors, threats, or other conservation needs of the targeted species.

Points_____

- 4) The duration that proposed practices and management will be effective (easements and other protection of areas being treated will be considered).

Points_____

- 5) Scale of the project in relation to the habitat needs of the targeted species.

Points_____

- 6) The number of partners, degree of commitment, and type of contributions.

Points_____

- 7) Cost effectiveness points will equal 800/Total cost to NRCS per acre treated. Acres treated are acres that will realize resource improvement because of application of practices used in this ranking) **10 points max.**

Points_____

Total points_____

Tie Breaker = Number of participants (landowners) included in proposal.

Points_____

\$_____